

Waterbirds Meeting, New Bern, NC 9/20-9/23/2016
AMBC meeting 9/21-22

Wednesday 9/21

Introductions (several new members), reminder if you're not on the mailing list to sign up

Brief history & accomplishments of the AMBC (Pat J. & Tim J.):

- History (Pat J.)
 - First meeting in 2005
 - Wide focus area (nearshore to offshore) and inclusive for a wide range of species
 - Organize funding needs and discussing what areas had funding (wind energy)
 - What are the threats (bycatch, oil spill, etc.)
 - Methods used (distribution, abundance, tracking)
 - Gaps in research (open water), eventually included colonies as well
 - Unifying terminology used across areas/species
 - Discussing priorities and creating a document for reference
 - Steering community but no defined leader, working groups
 - Challenge in getting states to attend meetings (are video meetings an option to include states?)
- Accomplishments (Tim)
 - Holds a seat at the World Seabird Union
 - *Bycatch working group* (lead: Caleb):
 - Created a draft plan for bycatch (2011), still in draft form. This led to a workshop (2014)
 - *Distribution and Abundance working group*:
 - Ships of opportunity (Dick V.), AMAPPS (Tim J.), data management - NWASC (Alan O'C./ Tim J.), Phalarope surveys in Bay of Fundy, ME, Individual tracking projects (diving bird study (Caleb/ Ian S./ Andrew G. Alicia B.) - sub working group, Nano tags (Pam L.)), NOAA's modeling and the ocean planning data portals (Arliss W./ Brian K.)
 - *Habitat working group*: works in all other groups
 - *Oil Spill working group*:
 - damage assessment & response, publication of Beached Bird Guide, NOAA environmental sensitivity index maps (what species would be impacted where)
 - *Outreach and education working group*:
 - Created in Hershey, PA (new), communicate to schools and groups, wanted to produce a fact sheet for the AMBC, design and complete a logo (Ian S.)
 - Pelagic VCR's (Doug F., Dick V., Haney, Andrew G.), delineation of boundaries for marine bird conservation
 - Workshop on effects of offshore wind development (2007)

- List of priority seabird species provided to states as they developed second version of SWAPS
- Annual updates/ newsletter of accomplishments
- Ability to state in proposals that a project is a priority of the AMBC
- Pre and post construction voluntary monitoring guidelines - input from AMBC, draft document (FWS, Eric K., Linda W.). Updates, designs are changing, and disagreements across groups - more discussion might need to happen. BOEM guidelines fed into these (Elise Z. report too). Still data gaps in impacts of wind energy on seabirds.
- Lead to achievements and funding opportunities within agencies and groups from conversations, networking relationships, and ideas in the AMBC. Helped to maintain partnerships/ collaborations as well as create new ones.

Discussion on working groups:

- Current working groups
 - Bycatch
 - Distribution and Abundance
 - Tracking
 - Habitat
 - Oil Spill
 - Outreach and education
- New working groups created at this meeting
 - Website group (Troy, John, Caleb, Deb R., Andrew G., Holly work on the accomplishments part of this)
 - Guidance document group (Pam L./ Caleb leads. Linda W., Yvan, Troy W., Tim W., Dick V., John, Alicia, Andrew G. Holly G., Jeff S., Ruth, Arliss W. - these people raised their hand to help 5 days out of the year but not specifically on this document so we need to check in that these individuals are willing to do this). Pam and Caleb will divide individuals
 - What have we accomplished
 - Linda
 - Tim J.
 - Melanie
 - Scott J.
 - Review where we stand with each of the treats we've listed in the past
 - Dick V.
 - What do we do as a group (purpose/scope, mission statement)
 - Jeff
 - What we want to work on over the next few years (define working groups)
 - Caleb
 - Ruth
 - Newsletter (Caleb, Holly)
 - Nearshore/ beaches/ colonies (Ruth) - breeding population estimates, near shore foraging, reproductive rates, would want to provide data to the AMBC and then

- get feedback to states on what we need, can inform distribution/abundance at sea, organizing protocols (FL to Canada), link to management, funding
- Forage fish (Linda, Holly, Caleb, Kaycee)
- Proposed - Life cycle group that links colonies and sea (Alicia), identify species and linkages
- Ideas would happen in working groups at the AMBC meetings but lack of time/ effort/ capacity in between meetings. One of our big challenges, making these ideas happen. A formal person to check in on working groups updates (monthly?) might help.
- Address if working groups are a burden to members? Or if this is something to continue? Is this something we can get funding to do? (sidebar to future planning discussion)
- Addition of nearshore/colony working group?

What has and has not worked for us?

- Previous AMBC involvement (answers from Caleb's survey)
 - *Benefits of being part of the AMBC (n=23)*: awareness of AMBC activities, coordination of work, information sharing, identifying research and management needs, development of restoration actions, identifying funding opportunities, relationship that lead to partnerships. In room additions: species prioritization - better understanding of what people are working on and find important.
 - *Greatest accomplishments directly attributed to AMBC (n=14)*: collaboration, attention to bycatch issues (info exchange between agencies, managers, and scientists) - testing gear in Newfoundland, funding to complete new surveys for offshore wind development, better understanding of seabird distributions and abundance, development and funding of several large-scale collaborative seabird research studies, protection from wind energy development (e.g. Nantucket shoals) - directly influenced management decisions.
 - *How can we improve moving forward (n=17)*: Increased communication between meetings (regular conference calls and electronic updates) - need more coordination, scheduled meetings away from beginning and end of fiscal year, focus on finding funding opportunities for research, focus on identifying and implementing conservation actions and measuring success, more emphasis on breeding colonies, define group structure/goals and move on (don't repeat the same discussions), improve tracking and formal capture of the discussions, more carry over from one meeting to the next, development of actionable items and identifications of who's responsible - need volunteers to make this group a success. In room additions: get more creative with funding opportunities - seek out private funders (e.g. Pacific seabird funding example), emphasis of looking at the whole picture which might span across agencies and multiple funders - regional/ flyway level research, how to include breeding colonies/ post breeding aggregations on a broad scale (rather than local focus) - how this relates to forage fish, more involvement from states with the addition of a nearshore focus (populations, exchange between subpopulations, breeding/post breeding groups) - could be it's own working group or sub-working group, addition of Canadian attendance (Caleb and Linda are on this, there was early attendance but travel is

difficult, some involvement in bycatch working group) - Environment Canada has a database with at sea observations - NWASC might benefit from this? Andrew G. & Alan O'C. had these conversations early on - Canadian data is in a better shape and in a different format but NOAA is working with these groups for their modeling effort (PIROP, Karina). Addition of Caribbean involvement - Birds Caribbean group - this was not included early on because a lot of the work in the Caribbean was colonial but it would be good to coordinate with them as well as for those birds that pass through there and are being tracked. LCC involvement - esp. Caribbean LCC. Sensitivity/ vulnerability to species decline from offshore wind development - Normandeau did this, David Bigger has a model/report but it didn't include all variables that could be studied, there are areas to expand on this. Would have to be extensive to include other areas that would cause population decline (predators, prey, life history). Possibly devoting time/ funding/ coordination for long term ichthyoplankton sampling to better understand early life stages of forage fish species. Better coordination with groups who know patchy distributions of forage fish around colonies. Better coordination with groups outside of the US for birds in the Atlantic that are breeding outside of the US - and better understanding through tagging birds of where they are coming from (e.g. great shearwaters). Several people are interested in answering and connecting these big life cycle questions and curious about how far funding will go to protect a species (e.g. managing predators outside of the US).

- Would like to have more funders come to the meeting and explain what they are looking to fund and how we can mold/re-word our goals to get that money - it would be steering committee's job to make sure those people are in the room

NOTE: Email Tim White if you have questions or comments about BOEM/NMFS forage fish/seabird meeting. Tim will send out email.

Participation Information on Caleb's survey:

- 30 people responded. Primarily federal agencies responded (63.3%).
- Majority of respondents were involved with the AMBC between 0-3 years
- The majority of respondents have not been involved in any working groups (which there are a lot of new folks). The tracking group had the most involvement.
- The majority of respondents are involved in other science or conservation groups (83.3%). The majority of people involved in other groups were involved in waterbirds. The second highest was "other" which spanned several options.
- What activities would you like AMBC to focus on? Answers from survey (n=30): Developing applied conservation actions, sharing results of research, identifying and applying for funding, advocacy public outreach

Who is our audience?:

- From survey (n=30, can answer more than one time?): Managers (95%), scientists (80%), funders (50%), general public (35%), other (10% -> fishing industry x2, NGOs x1)
- AMBC, collaborators, increase membership

- Fish people: NMFS, there's been an increase effort in the NEFSC. Most of this effort has been because of ecosystem based management becoming a more popular idea. Also involvement with the New England fisheries management council. Academic labs like WHOI have also reached out to use bird data for fisheries problems? NOAA bycatch observers
- What NGOs are members of the AMBC? BRI doesn't do advocacy. Audubon society. ABC attended earlier meetings but not lately.
- Should we define our goals/priorities and then think about target audience afterward? Audience can change with our focus.
- Commercial development industries. Is this the job of the managers to talk with industry directly? Sometimes the industry goes to us directly for answers.
- International audiences where life cycles connect

What is our thematic and geographic scope:

- From survey (n=30): 50% sea/ 50% colonies (n=22, 68%), all colonies (n=7) [could be mostly at sea, both are red], mostly colonies (n=1), all at sea (n=0), mostly at sea (n=0).
- Also need to include pathways between sea and colony, the link between (and have people who do both in one working group)
- Need entire life cycle
- Large data gaps at sea
- Data gaps at colonies in certain areas/ states too (esp. in the southeast), and colonies on a broad scale rather than local scale
- AMBC scope when from Atlantic Canada to just before the Caribbean. We are going to include colonies in the Arctic. Are we going to include the Caribbean, what does that entail? The Caribbean folks would most likely not attend due to funding challenges. We're already thinking about a lot of these species anyway, but we should communicate with Birds Caribbean for colony knowledge.
- Distributions are shifting with climate change, need to expand scope to tropics and arctic if we're following the birds
- Create a timeline of when we include Canada and Caribbean, starting off with engaging with the groups.
- Liaison to relay information to areas that cannot attend meetings, keep the communication channels open (for Canada, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico)
- Ties in with structure discussion (World Seabird Union has affiliate members and associate members - our structure currently is that we're not excluding anyone who wants to join)
- What are the most critically endangered birds that come close to the US coast is a frequently asked question by BOEM, this includes life history stages in the US but species that might not be here all the time. Does this mean we don't care about them? Tracking data can help us to define if they are included in our priority species and our scope (e.g. Gadfly petrels).
- Gulf of Mexico is not included even though there is exchange. Funding in the GOM is not great for seabird but GOMAPPS is ramping up. There is a avian issue group,

GOMAN. If we do expand we can include them. There are oil spill avian biologists too that could be pulled in.

Priorities (threats that we can do something about, what we feel like we need to do):

- From survey what are important issues (n=30, picked top 3): Protection of forage fish (80%), Climate change (55%), offshore energy development (50%), fisheries bycatch (40%), marine debris (35%), predation management for colonies (15%), other (10%, human disturbance, breeding, staging area protection), invasives/ alien species (~7%), oil spills and pollution (~4%), aquaculture (0%)
- From survey science gaps (n=30, pick 2): influence of forage resources on populations (~62%), abundance and distribution (50%), bird movement and migration (40%), understanding climate change effects (~35%), coordinated colony monitoring (15%), other (10%, menhaden biology in winter, marine debris impacts, where are the nonbreeding adults)
- Aggregate all the colonial data, and coordinate the states (FWS? - this has been talked about but no solid plan yet). Not an up to date colony atlas/ registry available for the north atlantic
- Better understanding climate change adaptation and impacts and distributional shifts (inform marine reserves/ sanctuaries creation), sea level rise, relating forage fish distributional change to seabird distributional change
- Form an Atlantic marine birds business plan (that doesn't blow up to the entire life-cycle of all species including international colonies and management?). Use the Pacific plan as a model. New Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium also has a generic plan/ statement we can build off of. Series of actions with link to outcome and the amount of money it would take to accomplish that. There is a business plan for shorebirds in the atlantic flyway. Involve potential funders. This does include readdressing the plan in 5 years to see how well it worked and see where to go next. Might need to address groups or specific threats rather than specific species in this plan. At this time we are not at this step.
- Better handle on distribution and abundance of birds in the gulf stream, south Atlantic Bight (monitoring at sea)
- Define priority forage fish and increase our voice in the fisheries councils, prevent fisheries from developing for sand lance, make sure that buffers around seabird colonies for fishing is accurate
- Supply data to ocean plans (NROC) and make sure data is accessible to public and managers.
- Understanding where the birds are now and why
- Need to look back into 2007 documents to add more threats to this list that we didn't have time to talk about
- Should we make the AMBC a NGO to funnel funds through us?
- Use SDM framework to help us structure our priorities? Do we want a structure process?
- Develop influence diagram of the marine system, explore links that affect each other (Jason Link has created models that might help)
- Do we need focal species? We've identified threat categories in a prior meeting.

- Create goals to achieve by a specific time. And restoration outcomes where it corresponds with a threat.
- Create colony and at sea working groups to outline a page or two about our priorities (and make sure links are included on both sides)
- Need to organize what we've done to accomplish our mission statement and actually go back and see what we have done and what is left to do - we are not communicating this well even within the group let alone to outsiders. Email everyone and ask them to list what they have done that addresses the mission statement? Go back to 2007 list to see what we have done well. Who will do this???
- Facilitation, cooperative, identify data gaps, collaboration

Visions, Goal Statements, Missions:

- *Old Mission Statement (2007)*: By 2025 marine bird population status, distribution, and habitat use patterns in the northwest atlantic are well understood and incorporated into marine resource policies and regulations such that populations are stable and sustainable into the future
- Providing information to managers so that they can make use of it and make good decisions

Wrap up:

- People want this group continue
- We are broadening our scope
- Need to work on our priorities
- Need to evaluate what we've done and where to go from there

Thursday 9/22

Group structure:

- From the survey the majority of people did think there should be a formal structure (n=18), and 12/18 people said that they would volunteer for such a role
- Should meeting time be devoted to working groups, majority said yes (n=22)
- Pat's ideas/models for structure
 - Scientific society structure like the waterbird society: formal, bylaws, elections, officers, dues, membership. Meets Yearly. Internal funding.
 - Meta-organization like the World Seabird Union structure - facility exchange of information between other smaller seabird groups (24 groups), representatives, representatives drive decisions through votes, board structure, each organization has a seat, no real members/fees, small grants program. Meets every 5 years.
 - Gulf of Mexico avian monitoring network (GOMAN) - no formal membership, working teams focused around taxa (~7-8), small steering committee from each taxa group lead and a rep. from each state (5). Meets twice a year. Webex meetings have worked ok. No internal funding, but FWS R4 might be supporting FWS employees? SDM group to rank proposals, missions, teams. Taxa working groups all had the same goal and timeline - then they would bring all those models together and look for commonality between models.

- Should organize working groups by treats/ research needs, small working groups is optimal
- Melanie used to be lead/organizer informally and now that she has been less involved there's been less direction, especially in working groups. Unlike GOMAN our working groups have very different goals.
- Need to have someone to go between groups rather than everyone working on their own specific problems, to think on a larger scale. This should be the steering committee (engaged, committed and available) to make sure the working groups are on track, working on the right issues at the right time, keeping track of what's happening with the mission statement - are we on track? Steering committee would be the face of the organization, who funders would call.
- Should limit the number of working groups we have as to not divide the group too thin - not get too specific/ stay broad to be inclusive, need to make sure there's enough people coming to the working groups to make sure that they remain functional. Need clear objects to measure accomplishment. Objectives should try to match what people are working on already to not add a great deal of excess work. Small specific goals can work if they have clear goals and they are working on those.
- Not beneficial to us to list all threats? Just those that people are already working on and that we have a chance to make progress on. We should occasionally evaluate that to make sure we're not excluding people and if individual's focuses have shifted
- Need leads of working groups to define themselves so that the rest of the AMBC can decide if they would like to participate in that working group

Support structures:

- Website - we had one but it went down 3 years ago. Was used for sharing information within the group but focus should switch to a less information heavy site (we can use google docs or dropbox for these things instead). From the survey the majority of people said they would like a website (n=25)
 - Website should include
 - Mission statement
 - Groups involved
 - Highlight accomplishments
 - Raise and maintain visibility
 - Serve project results and tools
 - Communication among AMBC, and for outsiders to see who to contact
 - Our guidance document on the website
 - Do we have support and funding? Yes, Deb Reynolds has volunteered to create it but question on who will maintain it
 - Website committee: Troy, John, Caleb, Andrew G., and Deb R.
 - Include links to data/ products
 - Can link to AKN in the long term
- Newsletter
 - From the survey the majority of the group had not used the AMBC annual projects review/ update email (n=17)

- Those that used the email used it for outreach (funders, partners, supervisors, resource managers, and potential funders/partners), updates, justifying time spent in this group, and contacts.
- Would need someone to step up and work on and send out the newsletter
- Complaint - usually overlap with PSG updates
- Proposal of a spreadsheet to update each year for internal updates on a facilitation website (Griffin groups, basecamp) - easy to look at a summary of what has happened over 5 years rather than sorting through newsletters
- Should the newsletter updates only be on the website instead of emailed out? Probably both. The newsletter can have links to the website if they want to learn more, then we can cut down how long the newsletter is.
- Holly G. volunteered to help compile updates
- Skipped last year's newsletter and this year's newsletter will most likely come out in 2017

Future Planning/ Next steps:

- Proposal to put together a guidance document for our group including what we've accomplished as a group, what we do as a group (purpose/scope), what we want to work on over the next 3 (or 5-7) years (and in our working groups). Need a group to work on this outside of the meeting.
- Pam L. and Caleb will take a more organizational/ encouraging role.
- Willing to put in 5 days outside of this meeting to help: Pam L., Linda W., Yvan, Troy W., Tim W., Dick V., John, Alicia, Andrew G. Holly G., Jeff S., Ruth, Arliss W. (should also look back to the survey to see if other people volunteered but were not present at the meeting, from the survey 15 people volunteered 2-5, 14 people for 5-14 days)
- Liaisons: Will for the Caribbean, Iain S. for Canada, Troy for Gulf of Mexico
- Caleb will send out a template for forming new groups
- Working groups from the past that are still working should also pitch those and organize what they are working on and where they are going in the future - need lead for each group
- Make a list of who is working on what and how they group logically -> can miss big opportunities and big issues this way, organize by threat AND research needs (look through 2007 document for reference)
- Put out another google form and have members list two things they would like to work on and form groups from these? E.g. understanding wintering bird connectivity and where they are going to breed (through tagging)
- Jeff would like to work on what we do as a group and purpose/scope on guidance doc
- Caleb will group under threats for the brainstorming exercise

Brainstorming exercise:

- Ruth - nearshore/ colonies (Troy - add Gulf of Mexico, Mary - standardization of how data is collected including in the Pacific, Tim W.)

- Holly - influence of forage fish dynamics on species, population dynamics of forage fish and birds (John, Linda, Will - add more prey species, add climate change, Jim W. - recruitment and mortality of birds and fish, Tim W., Kaycee)
- Andrew - connectivity of colony or area of origin (add why this matters, Yvan, Tim W.)
- Iain - influence of plastics
- Johnathon - flight altitudes and collision risk modeling
- Alicia - influence of weather on flight behavior
- Jeff - where are the non-breeding birds and what are they doing
- Pat - interannual availability in diet of seabirds (Yvan, Tim W.)
- Brian - continuing strategies to reduce seabird bycatch
- Dick V. - data needs for distribution and abundance data (Tim W.)
- Arliss - synthesizing tracking and distribution data (Kaycee)
- Pam L. - coordination of methods for estimating exposure to offshore wind energy areas (Kaycee)
- Yvan - baseline data on contaminants